

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-5, 12, 14, 22-25, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Tillmetz et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,410,175. Claims 6, 9, 13, 20, 21 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as rendered obvious by Tillmetz. Claims 7, 8, 26 and 27 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as rendered obvious by Tillmetz. Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as rendered obvious by Tillmetz in view of Narayanan et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,299,744. Claims 15, 30, 31, and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as rendered obvious by Tillmetz in view of Prakash et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,444,343. Claims 10, 16-19, 32, and 33 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In the Amendment dated May 27, 2003, Applicants traversed the rejections on the grounds that Tillmetz is not effective as prior art against the present application. Applicants asserted that the present application is entitled to an earlier priority date based upon a claim of priority to German Patent Application

No. 19807876.5. This German application has an effective filing date (February 25, 1998) which is earlier than Tillmetz's filing date (November 12, 1998).

In the final Office Action dated July 24, 2003, Applicants' claim for priority to the German application was not accepted, with the result that the rejections based on Tillmetz were maintained. More particularly, the Office Action stated:

Acknowledgement is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority based on an application filed in Germany on 2/25/98. It is noted, however, that applicant has not filed a certified copy of the above application as required by 35 U.S.C. 119(b).

(Office Action, page 6).

Applicants are enclosing with this paper a certified copy of German Patent Application No. 19807876.5, as well as a translation of that application. Since the present application properly claims the benefit of the February 25, 1998 filing date of German Application No. 19807876.5 under 35 U.S.C. §119, the rejections based on Tillmetz et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,410,175 should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claims 1-9, 11-15, 20-31, and 34 are allowable, in addition to claims 10, 16-19 and 32-33 indicated as being allowable. The Examiner is invited to telephone the applicants' undersigned attorney at (312) 775-8202 if any unresolved matters remain. Please charge any fees incurred in connection with this submission to Deposit Account No. 13-0017 in the name of McAndrews, Held & Malloy, Ltd.

Respectfully submitted,



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